

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, UNESCO

SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: RESULTS OF THE 19TH
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO

REF: A) STATE 277363; B) STATE 277362; C) STATE 295248;
D) STATE 295249; E) STATE 301115; F) CFR NO 49

1. SUMMARY: THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO
CONCLUDED ITS 19TH SESSION IN NAIROBI NOVEMBER 30.
ALTHOUGH OUTCOME SOME KEY ISSUES DISAPPOINTING,
OVERALL RESULTS POSITIVE ON BALANCE AND SOMEWHAT
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BETTER THAN ANTICIPATED. DETERMINED TO BE HELPFUL
TO DG M'BOW AND OBJECTIVES HE SET FOR CONFERENCE,
AFRICANS PLAYED KEY ROLE IN ACHIEVING POSITIVE
CONFERENCE ACTIONS AND IN MODERATING NEGATIVE
DECISIONS. DEMARCHES BY MANY ADDRESSEE POSTS ALSO
PLAYED IMPORTANT ROLE SUPPORTIVE OF US EFFORTS AND

OBJECTIVES AT 19TH GC. END SUMMARY.

2. THE NINETEENTH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO MET IN NAIROBI FROM OCTOBER 26 TO NOVEMBER 30. OUTCOME WAS OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO US BECAUSE IT WOULD LARGELY DETERMINE EXTENT TO WHICH US WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN UNESCO ACTIVITIES. FOLLOWING

THE 18TH GENERAL CONFERENCE IN 1974 AT WHICH SEVERAL ANTI-ISRAELI DECISIONS HAD BEEN TAKEN, THE US CONGRESS DECIDED TO WITHHOLD THE US CONTRIBUTION TO UNESCO UNTIL CONCRETE STEPS WERE TAKEN TO CORRECT THESE DECISIONS.

3. OF THE FOUR KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE CONFERENCE, THREE RELATED TO ISRAEL: ADMISSION OF ISRAEL TO THE EUROPEAN GROUP; ISRAELI EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PRACTICES IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES; AND JERUSALEM EXCAVATIONS. THE FOURTH ISSUE WAS THE SOVIET-INSPIRED DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE MASS MEDIA. RESULTS WERE, ON BALANCE, POSITIVE ALTHOUGH THE CONFERENCE BY NO MEANS COMPLETELY REVERSED ALL ITS EARLIER POSITIONS. FYI. DUE TO VOTING METHOD AT GC, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON VOTING BEHAVIOR OF MEMBER STATES OVER THAT WHICH NOTED IN REFTELS A THROUGH E. BALLOTING WAS BY SHOW OF HANDS ONLY, A PROCEDURE INHIBITING THE MAINTENANCE OF AN ACCURATE RECORD OF INDIVIDUAL VOTES. END FYI.

4. POSITIVE RESULTS: A) ASSIGNMENT OF ISRAEL TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEMBERSHIP IN EUROPEAN REGION RECTIFIED 1974 GC REJECTION OF ISRAEL, WHICH WAS A KEY FACTOR IN CONGRESSIONAL CUT-OFF OF FUNDS TO UNESCO. B) SOVIET DRAFT MASS MEDIA DECLARATION SENT TO SPECIAL DRAFTING AND NEGOTIATING GROUP (DNG) - A PROCEDURAL MANEUVER DESIGNED BY M'BOW TO MUTE DIVISIVE ISSUES. DRAFT WAS INIMICAL TO AMERICAN VALUES OF PRESS FREEDOM; IN ADDITION, IT REFERENCED UN RESOLUTION 3379 EQUATING ZIONISM WITH RACISM. GC LATER POSTPONED DECISION ON UNIVERSAL DECLARATION UNTIL 1978 GC. WHOLE MASS MEDIA CONCEPT, NOT JUST SOVIET DRAFT, NOW OPEN FOR COMPLETE RENEGOTIATION. C) RADICAL ARABS THWARTED IN EFFORTS TO EQUATE ZIONISM WITH RACISM, OR TO INCLUDE NEW PROCEDURAL AND SUBSTANTIVE CHALLENGES AGAINST ISRAEL IN OTHER CONFERENCE DECISIONS. OF PARTICULAR NOTE WAS DRAFT RESOLUTION ON RACISM AND INTERNATIONAL PEACE WHICH ALSO WAS ROUTED THROUGH DNG. WHEN IT EMERGED FOR VOTE IN PLENARY, REFERENCES TO RESOLUTION

3379 HAD BEEN DROPPED. THUS, US COULD JOIN OVERWHELMING VOTE IN FAVOR (84(US)-3-0). D) OVERALL, CONFERENCE DEVOTED LESS TIME THAN IN PAST TO CONTENTIOUS DEBATES ON ISSUES. THIS WAS ATTRIBUTABLE IN LARGE MEASURE TO DG M'BOW, PROCEDURAL MECHANISMS HE DEvised TO AVOID PARTICULARLY ACRID, "NO-WIN" DEBATES, AND GENERAL AFRICAN SUPPORT FOR HIM.

5. NEGATIVE RESULTS: CONFERENCE REAFFIRMED TWO RESOLUTIONS FROM 18TH GC HIGHLY CRITICAL OF ISRAEL. A) FIRST RESOLUTION ATTACKED ISRAELI EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL POLICIES IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES PRIOR TO FACTUAL INVESTIGATION. B) SECOND CRITICIZED ISRAELI ARCHEOLOGICAL DIGS IN JERUSALEM, ALLEGED HARM TO CITY'S HISTORICAL CHARACTER, AND EXTENDED 1974 CUT-OFF UNESCO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS. EVEN IN THESE CASES, HOWEVER, THERE WAS AN ELEMENT OF MODERATION: ARAB HARD-LINERS WERE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNSUCCESSFUL IN PUSHING HARsher RESOLUTIONS (WHICH WOULD HAVE EXPANDED THE SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL FOR ITS ALLEGEDLY HARMFUL ACTIVITIES IN JERUSALEM), AND THE PLENARY VOTES AGAINST ISRAEL WERE MARGINALLY IMPROVED OVER THE COMMISSION VOTES AS A RESULT OF AFRICAN ABSENCES/ABSTENTIONS. (ON THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, THE VOTE AGAINST ISRAEL WAS REDUCED FROM 73-6(US)-30 TO 61-5(US)-28 AND FROM 70-25(US)-14 TO 61-19(US)-16 ON JERUSALEM.)

6. ASSESSMENT: A) OVERALL RESULTS WERE STRIKINGLY CLOSE TO INITIAL PREDICTIONS FOR CONFERENCE. IT CLEAR AFRICANS WILLING TO FOLLOW M'BOW, OFTEN IN FACE STRONG SOVIET-EE AND RADICAL ARAB OPPOSITION. OBJECTIVES WERE APPARENTLY TO SEE US FUNDING RESTORED AND SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF FIRST GC IN AFRICA WITH AFRICAN DG.

B) IN LARGE MEASURE BECAUSE OF M'BOW, PROCEDURAL MANEUVERS HE DEvised TO MUTE DIVISIVENESS, AFRICAN SUPPORT OF HIM, AND ACTIVE US REPRESENTATIONS, ARAB HARD-LINERS OFTEN UNSUCCESSFUL PUSHING PARTICULARLY HARSH RESOLUTIONS, SUCH AS EXPANDING SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL FOR ALLEGEDLY HARMFUL ACTIVITIES IN JERUSALEM.

C) DESPITE CONFERENCE CRITICISM OF ISRAEL, MEDIA COVERAGE IN NAIROBI AND EDITORIAL COMMENT IN US BASICALLY POSITIVE TOWARD GC AND UNESCO. IN MANY INSTANCES, POSITIVE REACTION EXTENDED TO RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESUMPTION OF US CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ORGANIZATION.

7. ON BALANCE, IT APPARENT FROM GC RESULTS THAT MANY MEMBER STATES SOUGHT TO AVOID CONFRONTATIONS OR TO DAMAGE UNESCO IRREPARABLY. SOME REASONS FOR THIS OUTLOOK NOTED ABOVE. HOWEVER, DEPT SEES PROMINENT FACTOR EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATIONS IN HOST COUNTRY CAPITALS AS WELL AS IN WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK, BOTH PRIOR TO AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DURING PLAY OF CONFERENCE. DEPT APPRECIATES RAPID, EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FOR REPRESENTATIONS ON KEY ISSUES AT POSTS.

8. IF ASKED BY HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ABOUT US ASSESSMENT OF THE CONFERENCE, OR PROSPECTS FOR RESUMPTION OF PAYMENT OF DUES TO UNESCO, POSTS SHOULD FOLLOW GUIDANCE CONTAINED IN STATE 291437 BEING REPEATED SEPTEL TO ALL POSTS. POSTS SHOULD NOT SPECULATE ON FUTURE INVOLVEMENT OF US IN UNESCO, OR RESUMPTION OF PAYMENT OF DUES TO THE ORGANIZATION. KISSINGER

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